

P 231347Z FEB 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0190  
INFO SOMALIA COLLECTIVE  
HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
CIA WASHDC  
COMUSNAVCENT  
DIA WASHDC  
NSC WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
CJTTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ

S E C R E T ASMARA 000066

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/EX AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [ER](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: MEETINGS WITH SHEIKH AWEYS

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d)

11. (C) AWEYS MEETS WITH DIPLOMATS  
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In recent weeks Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, leader of the hard-line faction of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia based in Asmara, has met with diplomats from a number of countries, including Canada, Egypt, Libya, and Finland. Most recent was Aweys' February 16 meeting with a Nairobi-based Canadian diplomat. According to the Canadian official, the purpose of his meeting was to seek Aweys' support in negotiating the release of a Canadian citizen kidnapped by Islamist extremists in Somalia. The Canadian reported Aweys spoke in generalities, but said "he'd do what he could." The Canadian official also voiced to the ambassador his concern about Canadian citizens being recruited by al-Shabaab for violent purposes in Somalia, East Africa, or North America.

12. (S) POST'S WORKING-LEVEL CONTACTS  
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Embassy Asmara has not met with its normal ARS hard-line faction contacts since December 10, due to potential security concerns arising from the USG request to Eritrea regarding Aweys and other issues. Eritrean authorities, who are apparently trying to keep Aweys on a very short leash, were not involved in setting up any of the meetings mentioned in para 1, except Aweys' audience with Colonel Qadhafi in Massawa. A number of our best working-level ARS contacts have managed to slip the Eritrean leash and are now in Somalia, UAE, or Djibouti. Given the current fluid situation in Somalia, Post will seek appropriate opportunities to press remaining faction members to engage with the government of Somalia, distance themselves from al-Shabaab and other extremist groups, and to leave Eritrea.

13. (C) DAILY CONSTITUTIONAL  
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Aweys and his family - reportedly consisting of four wives and a number of children - reside in a middle-class Asmara neighborhood also home to several Emboffs. Aweys (hard to miss with his day-glow orange goatee) is occasionally seen strolling in the neighborhood, accompanied by a sole male companion. Apart from a chance encounter last year in a hotel lobby, Emboffs have not had or sought face-to-face contact with Aweys.

MCMULLEN